

Precinct Reporter

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Community Action Partnership Starts Project Homeless Connect

By Dianne Anderson
Staff Writer

As crime hits new highs and has become a priority for city officials, another big problem has taken the back seat.

In this the month of tidings and good joy to all people, San Bernardino Community Action Partnership is planning its Homeless Project Connect that will visit local officials next month from Barstow to Bloomington and points in between to help address a problem that most people choose not to see.

Most other counties have adopted a ten-year plan to end homelessness, which is part of the national

intent to work with other agencies on a problem growing countywide; up to 8,000 individuals and families are identified as homeless on any given night.

HUD approves millions in grant funding to counties each year, and encourages agencies to link up, and piggyback in applying for funding services. When the grant comes down, the money goes directly to those agencies.

Every year, CAP coordinates that application process, with all service providers submitting their application to CAP and culled together in one big application that HUD approves based on a continuum of care, meaning all agencies, government, local, public and private, pulling together to address the problem.

"I'm sure they [councils and supervisors] are aware. This time they're going to see faces so they can put a face to homelessness," she said.

Everyone is now waiting for the official headcount that will start toward the end of January, and give the hard numbers that bring down HUD funding for homeless services.

As it stands, there is a shortfall of 3,048 beds. One of every seven homeless are under 21 years old, 1,018 were members of a family group. Of the total homeless population, 23 percent were women, 7

percent of the homeless are senior citizens, 15 percent were veterans.

Most of the problem is in the hands of elected officials, and a commitment to develop a ten-year plan to end homelessness, she said.

For Thanksgiving, CAP was able to deliver enough food to fill 5,632 holiday baskets to local feeding centers, she said.

"We get our USDA food commodities, and we also received food and 125 turkeys from Stater Bros., and Shady Brook Farms, Honeysuckle White turkeys," she said. "They do help with a lot of things in the community."

For Christmas, the agency will be throwing a party for their most needy families who receive case management, and those living in transition at the Obershaw House. The event is not open to the public, but they are currently accepting donations, especially of gift certificates for clothing, and shoes for over 200 families.

In the spirit of Christmas, she said that some agencies have graciously sacrificed a little holiday indulgence by not buying as many gifts for each other, and instead giving it to the poor.

"We are doing the party for the families that we serve at the Orange Show for December 15 and we're asking people to support us," she said. "Some people instead of having a Christmas party or buying a lot of gifts, they are sponsoring the families."

To donate, call (909) 891.2863.



CEO Patricia Nichols

HUD goal, but San Bernardino County is one of the few that has not yet developed its plan, said Rowena Concepcion with San Bernardino Community Action Partnership.

"We prepared a power point presentation to show homelessness in San Bernardino that we will show at various council meetings in different areas. We're asking 'what are you going to do because these are the homeless in your area?'" she said.

CAP, a non-profit agency serving low income and the homeless, is hoping to create awareness for city officials, and question how they